Statutory rules for service in the Highways department.

* 14 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state with reference to the answer given to Question No. 242 on 9th March 1949—

(*a*) whether statutory rules governing the conditions of service in the Highways department have been framed;

(*b*) if the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, what the rules are;

(*c*) what the modifications proposed are in respect of communal representation;

(*d*) whether the promotion of Assistant Engineers as Divisional Engineers on a temporary basis has resulted in anamolies overlooking the claims of the senior officers; and

(*e*) whether, in framing service rules for the Highways Department, the disparity between the basic salaries of Local Fund Assistant Engineers and Assistant Engineers (Highways) on the one hand and District Board Engineers and Divisional Engineers on the other has been taken into account?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) Statutory rules governing the conditions of service in the Highways Department have not yet been issued pending a final decision on certain points.

" (*b*) Does not arise.

" (*c*) No decision has been arrived at in the matter.

" (*d*) Pending issue of statutory rules for the Highways Department, appointments to the posts of Divisional Engineers are made on the analogy of the rules relating to the old Madras District Board Engineering Service. Half the number of vacancies in the category of Divisional Engineer's are filled by the appointment of persons selected on grounds of merit, ability and seniority and the other half by persons selected under the communal rule. The promotions already made have not resulted in anamolies overlooking the claims of senior officers if they were otherwise suitable.

" (*e*) The scales of pay admissible to Local Fund Assistant Engineers and Distrct Board Engineers II Grade were less than the scales admissible to Assistant Engineers and Divsional Engineers in the Highways Department. In fixing the pay of Local Fund Assistant Engineers and District Board Engineers as Assistant Engineer (Highways) and Divisional Engineers (Highways) respectively, the pay drawn by them in the District Board service was duly taken into account."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" I find, Sir, that even on the ground of seniority some people have been superceded. May I know the reasons for it? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" We look into confidential records and reports of superior officers and take all that into account and promote officers."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Are the grounds communicated to the persons concerned before they are superceded and is any explanation taken from them as to why they should not be superceded? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I do not think grounds are communicated, Sir."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know, Sir, when the Hon. Minister expects to formulate these rules. The Highways Department has been in existence for over nearly three years. May I know, Sir, when these rules regulating seniority, etc., would be framed? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I do expect that we will be able to frame the rules very soon."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know, Sir, what was the necessity to adopt a different system of recruitment and promotion from Assistant Engineers to Divisional Engineers; half on communal representation and half on other basis when the rules are still in the course of formulation? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Because rules have not been framed we are proceeding on the old basis of recruitment to District Board Engineering Service."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" May I know, Sir, whether the words very soon ' would imply days, months or years? " (Laughter.)

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" It may mean anything, Sir." (Laughter.)

Dearness allowance to Government pensioners.

* 15 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government pensioners who have retired from all grades of Government service are in receipt of dearness allowance and if so, what the rates of such allowance are;

(*b*) whether it is a fact that in 1948 a cut of 50 per cent was effected in the dearness allowance granted to pensioners;

(*c*) whether pension has always been considered by Government as deferred pay;

(*d*) whether the Government have received representations pointing out the inequity involved in paying lower scales of dearness allowance to pensioners; and

(*e*) whether the Government have at any time reviewed this matter and if so, what their decision is?